



LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

1 Sam. 8:4-18, 9:15-17

Mark 10:42-45

Session Theme:

Kingship

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Icebreaker: Picking Sticks

Bring several long sticks and one short stick to class. Once all kids have arrived, hold one stick per kid (including the short stick) so they can't see the length of them, and ask everyone to choose a stick. See who gets the short stick and deem that person "class leader for the day." (The class leader can be the one to hand out supplies, etc.) Ask kids how they choose team captains or class presidents at school. Do they pick sticks or do something else? How is this the same or different from how nations choose their leaders?

In today's story, the Israelites decided they wanted a king. But they seemed to forget about God in the process. What happened? Let's begin our lesson and find out!

c. Opening Prayer

Lord God, we want to be your faithful followers. Guide us so we make wise decisions rather than thoughtless demands. Where we are called to lead, help us to serve with humble hearts. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- "Lead On, O King Eternal" (hymn)
- "Come, Thou Almighty King" (hymn)

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the Old Testament
- Scripture Section: Transition

Israel's path to becoming a united monarchy was not an easy one. Samuel was raised up by God at the end of the period of the Judges and became the first of the prophets to serve as God's advisor to the king.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth/Adults: Read aloud Scripture from the Bible

For Upper and Lower Elementary, use the Storyteller questions to help the students think about the events of the story.

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, and Questions)

Adults: Bible Study (Large or Small Group Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. Use the Bible Rhyme as a short review, or simply ask questions to help the students recall the events of the story.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Upper Elementary: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format



Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: 1 Samuel 8:4-18, 9:15-17

1. What were the names of the prophet Samuel's sons? Why were they not acceptable as successors to their father (v. 3)?

Samuel's sons were named Joel and Abijah. Scripture says they did not walk in Samuel's ways but "turned aside after gain" — meaning they were greedy, open to bribery, and used their office for their own personal privilege.

Ironically, the same had been true of the sons of Eli the priest, which was why Samuel was chosen as a prophet in the first place (1 Samuel 2:22-26).

2. From what you see in verses 4-6, for what reason do you think the people wanted a king in Israel? Do you think they hoped this would make their lives better?

The reason the people give is that Samuel's sons were not good leaders; however, their true reason is revealed when they say they want a king "like other nations" (v. 5). In a kind of patriotic envy, they wanted to be on par with the other nations around them. (It is important to remember that these other nations were pagan idol worshipers who did not share Israel's faith).

3. In verse 7, Samuel says the people have rejected him. How does God respond? Why was the request of the people an offense to God himself?

Samuel had led God's people for some time as a prophet and religious advisor. This call for a king felt to Samuel like he was being rejected. However, God says that it was actually a rejection of the Lord as their King. Scripture says: "The Lord is our judge; the Lord is our lawgiver; the Lord is our king; he will save us" (Isaiah 33:22). Apparently, the people of Samuel's day did not believe or want this.

4. Was this rejection of God a new thing for the Israelites? How does God describe their behavior in the past? What example does God use?

As God says in verse 8, this is what the people of Israel had done all along, going back to their first days as a people, back when God delivered them from Egypt at the time of the Exodus. They had always been a rebellious people, prone to follow after false gods and idols.

5. There's an old saying, "Be careful what you ask for." Why do you think God relented and gave the people what

they wanted? In what sense was this actually a form of punishment?

God's reason for giving us rules and guidance is to protect us and help our lives go well. He wants what is best for us. However, too often we want to do things our own way. So God says, "Go ahead, then, and see how that works out for you."

God rarely sends lightning bolts from heaven to punish people. The most common way that God "punishes" people is by simply letting them suffer the natural consequences of their actions.

6. What things does Samuel warn the people will happen when a king takes power? Do you think the people understood these implications?

Samuel warns that a king would conscript their sons to serve in his army, as foot soldiers, horsemen, and charioteers. Not only would he put them in harm's way, but they would not be home to work the family farm. The king would take daughters as well, to work in his palace. He would also tax the people on their produce and confiscate lands for his own. He would take the best of the people's flocks and herds and effectively make the people his slaves. Whether the people really believed this would happen, or if they thought Samuel was just exaggerating, they didn't seem to care; they just wanted a king.

7. Read Mark 10:42-45. How does Jesus describe the way leaders often act toward their people? In what way was Jesus himself different? What did he come to do for us?

Jesus says that rulers of the nations "lord it over them" and often become tyrants. Jesus himself was not like this; he did not seek after worldly power, but took the form of a servant (Philippians 2:7). He calls us to do the same.

The ultimate demonstration of Jesus' servanthood was that he gave his life for us to ransom us from our sins.

8. What should people of faith do when authorities order us to disobey God's commands? Can you think of any real-life examples in which this has happened or might happen in the future?

Under normal circumstance, people of faith are called to live our lives as good, law-abiding citizens, obedient to governing authorities (Romans 13:1-2). But when the authorities put us in a position where we are forced to do what God forbids, we must resist. "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

As governments become tyrannical, we may have to put our lives on the line to remain faithful.

Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Feast for a King Menus

Materials Needed:

- Copy paper
- Card stock
- Pencils
- Thin markers

Instructions:

Give each person a piece of card stock, a pencil, and a selection of markers.

Explain to the kids that they are going to design a menu for a king's coronation. But before writing anything on their menu, they need to think through what types of foods might be served at such a fancy meal. How many courses might there be? What would they serve for salads, breads, vegetables, main dishes, desserts? Have them jot down any ideas that come to mind on the copy paper.

Then, once they have their meals planned out, invite kids to design their menu on the card stock. Invite them to either fold their card stock in half or keep it as is, depending on the menu style they prefer. Encourage them to write everything in pencil first to make sure the words fit, and then to trace over it all in marker. Folded menus can have a picture drawn on the front. With either style, kids can use symbols and graphic design elements to make their menus unique.

The coronation of a king is a big deal. Parties are thrown, the richest foods are served, and people feast and celebrate for days.

In today's story, the people demanded a king to rule over them — and got one. But while they were focused on all the outward things that kingship involved, they overlooked some of the inner qualities a king should have. And they overlooked God.

As a result, they got what they asked for, a worldly king who would fight battles and make judgments.

This worked out well at first, but later, as Samuel warned, it would be a different story altogether.



Activity 2: The King's Throne Game

Materials Needed:

- White board
- Dry erase markers
- Two chairs

Instructions:

Place two chairs in front of the board, facing the class.

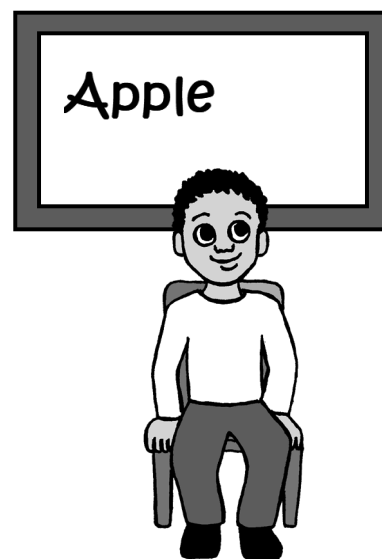
Divide the class into two teams and pick one person from each team to be the king of that group. (Feel free to crown the kings with paper crowns!) Each king will sit in a chair, back to the board.

Invite kids to sit on the floor in their teams, with each team facing their king. Write a word — something kids are familiar with and can describe — on the board behind each king. (It is important that the kings cannot see this word.) When you say, "Go," kids on each team should describe the word without saying it. Both kings try to guess the word.

The first king to say the correct word wins a point for his or her team. After this, choose a volunteer from each team to replace the kings for round two. Play like this until one of the teams reaches a certain number of points (say, 10 points).

In today's story, the people demanded a king. And they got one. Yet being a king isn't easy — it requires listening to a lot of voices and making wise choices in the midst of everything. King Saul tried to do this at first, but grew arrogant over time and became a destructive leader as a result.

A leader who is wise and looks to God in all things can make good decisions. But without God's help, anyone can easily get overwhelmed by the many voices clamoring for attention. This is good for us to remember, too. If we are ever put in leadership roles, we must not forget to turn to God for guidance.



Worksheet Answer Key

Shown below are the answers and solution to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:

Vocabulary Word for the Week

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary.

Kingship

the position of being a ruler or king

The Israelites wanted kingship for themselves because other nations had kings.

Reflection for the Week Ahead

Sometimes, we fall prey to the old saying "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence." We look at what someone else has and want the same thing for ourselves. The problem is, when we do this we are comparing our life (with all of its known challenges) to an imagined ideal. Reality is often quite different from what we think!

This is what happened with the Israelites. They envied other nations who had kings and assumed a king would solve all their problems. So they insisted on having one too. Unfortunately, they did not consult God or appreciate what he had already done for them. They only saw what they didn't have and thought they could do better. And as today's story implied, they later paid a price for their hasty demands.



Talk together about the following: Have you ever been envious of someone else and assumed you would be happier if you had what they had? How might this be incorrect? Why might it be helpful to first notice what God has already done for us before demanding more? It is fine to ask God for what we would like. But then we must trust him with the outcome. Perhaps we will get what we want; or maybe we will be given a new appreciation for what we already have.

The Practice of Prayer

Write a prayer thanking God for being the king of your life. Ask him to lead you and guide you, as well as those leaders who serve in positions of authority among us.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.

